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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 000506

SIPDIS

NSC FOR HADLEY; STATE FOR NEA/ARP

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [KISL](#) [YM](#) [DEMOCRATIC](#) [REFORM](#)

SUBJECT: FM QIRBI ON ARAB LEAGUE, GREATER MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE, MCA AND OTHER TOPICS

REF: A. SANAA 146

[1](#)B. SANAA 498

[1](#)C. SECSTATE 49816

[1](#)D. SANAA 505

Classified By: Ambassador Edmund J. Hull for Reasons 1.5 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ambassador called on ROYG Foreign Minister 3/7 to discuss developments with Arab League reform and the Greater Middle East Initiative upon the FM's return from the Cairo AL ministerial. Qirbi highlighted the drafting of a charter committing the Arab League to political and economic reform. On the GME Initiative, Qirbi said that some Arab governments were apprehensive while some were willing to consider points for "dialogue." Qirbi had little to add on recent CT operations in Abyan (septel). He welcomed information on Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). Ambassador also thanked FM for the ROYG condemnation the Iraq bombings and the Ministry's assistance in addressing Trafficking in Persons (TIP). Also present were DCM and Acting Pol/Econ Chief (notetaker). End Summary.

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Arab League Reform; Greater Middle East Initiative  
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[1](#)2. (C) Responding to the Ambassador's query on the meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo, FM Qirbi said intense debate occurred on "lots of issues," especially Arab League reform and how to proceed. Qirbi said the important point was they agreed to draft a charter committing themselves to political and economic reform, including helping underdeveloped Arab countries. Qirbi also noted they stressed the Arab commitment to Palestine. The draft AL reform proposal from Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia was changed after discussions to a "balanced and stronger" version. Qirbi said Arab leaders will designate foreign ministers to work on "substantial changes" to the Arab League charter, with proposals to be presented at the 2005 Algiers meeting. Qirbi later told the Ambassador that the discussions on Iraq were "positive," with the Arab League exhorting Iraqis to pull together and move forward.

[1](#)3. (C) On the Greater Middle East Initiative, Qirbi said that some foreign ministers objected to it being brought up without being on the formal agenda. Qirbi noted it was debated for two hours, with more discussion planned in Tunis. He said some were apprehensive, while some feel that it should be considered to see which issues are relevant so that a dialogue can begin. Qirbi noted two missing points that would have "made the Initiative more acceptable": Israel-Palestine and Iraq. Ambassador noted U/S Grossman's recent consultations and FM Qirbi's discussions in Washington, particularly at the NSC, as part of a broader dialogue. Ambassador raised the inclusion of the Sana'a Declaration (ref A) in the Under Secretary's remarks. Qirbi joked that he never thought the Declaration would be passed (at the Sana'a Conference), noting that the European Commission had also adopted a resolution marking the Declaration as a basis for moving forward. He encouraged the U.S. and Europe to work together with Arab governments.

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Iraq Bombing Condemnation; Security Operations/  
Renditions to Egypt; MCA; Trafficking in Persons;  
Upcoming Visitors  
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[1](#)4. (C) Ambassador thanked Qirbi for ROYG statements condemning the attacks on Karbala and Baghdad (ref B). Having just returned from Cairo, Qirbi added little information about recent security operations by ROYG security forces in Abyan that arrested al-Naseeb and others (septel), only noting that arrests announced to be in relation to suspects related to the USS Cole gives the public "acceptable reasons" for arrests, hinting that the relationship to the Cole is not always accurate. Ambassador noted the positive developments in Yemen and Egypt's security relationship as typified by the recent rendition of several suspects.

[1](#)5. (C) Ambassador passed report and talking points on Millennium Challenge Account (ref C) and noted the provision

for governments to provide comments. Ambassador said MCA was a priority, and Qirbi noted he had been briefed already by Yemen's Ambassador to the U.S. on the March 5 discussions. Ambassador thanked FM for the comprehensive cooperation provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ROYG ministries in addressing Trafficking in Persons (TIP). Ambassador noted TIP's importance and recognized the assistance of the Minister of Human Rights (ref D). Ambassador also mentioned possible upcoming USG visitors, including CJTF-HOA Brigadier General Robeson, CENTCOM General Abazaid and Arabian Peninsula U.S. Ambassadors.

HULL